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A Wenner-Gren Symposium: To Sydel: The Great Apes Revisited

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To Sydel:

The Great Apes Revisited

by Sue Savage-Rumbaugh

Apes are Great, but we cannot wait
For Africa to change her ways
Our usable time is limited to days.
Study and record we must--
While trying to protect a sacred trust..

From Tanzania, Uganda and Gabon--
From Wamba, Lomako and Gombe
From Cameroon and Ivory Coast and more--they came
They came to tell of tailless creatures,
Whose eyes they knew had special features

Frans talked of rules and empathy and smarts
Matsuzawa spoke of symbols and rocks and the arts.
Moore told us that theories must be perused---not just used
While Watts avowed that gorillas have been over simplified and confused.

McGrew and Marchant had a hand in all of this as well--
Was it the right or the left?
They found it difficult to tell.

Chimpanzees come and chimpanzees go--
They have something akin to parties you know
Christophe wrote; but what he said was more sublime---
Chimpanzees know where each one is--is all the time

Lottie explained that apes could exist in a world apart from trees
And in computerland they needed neither THV or leaves.

Frances White and Barbara Fruth talked of bonobos and sex and Lomako's
Plight.

While Wrangham avowed that the answer would soon be found in THV-
ALL RIGHT!

Kano said bonobos use leaves to engage in secret trysts--
Savage-Rumbaugh proposed they use leaves with a completely new and
different twist.

Caroline described gorillas that like to play hide and seek--
While Kuroda responded that he found them by calling in "gorilla speak."
Yamagiwa found them as well-- even though at times they attempted to
displace him from the trail.

Doran had seen them all, gorilla, chimpanzee and bonobo.
From Ndoki to Wamba to Gombe
They climb she said; our legs developed because of what happened--

Overhead.

Toshi reminded us that chimpanzees don't always follow rules
And even though sociobiology has many schools
It cannot yet account for why 8 infants were savaged from their
Mothers
At the hands of their very own uncles, fathers and unwitting
Brothers.

Carel spoke of apes who are red, who walk upon their fists
And who often engage in rape in lieu of trysts.
Why are orangs so different from the rest?
With this and other puzzles, man is blessed.

Adrienne reminded us the DNA has the answer to secrets
That will yet unfold:
While John told us that provisioning is an art, not an evil and
We must not scold.

And Jane---yes she came and went
Too soon, far too soon--
Leaving something of an empty room.
But Jane we thank you...we needed that.

For we must now, like you, reach inside ourselves
And do the bigger things--Do the better things
That real citizens of the word--Not just scientists
Are inevitably bound to do.